

A
LETTER

OF A

French Protestant,
CONCERNING,

The late MIRACLE reported to have
been done neer the Town of
SAUMUR.



LONDON,

Printed by A. M. 1668.

*A Letter of a French Protestant concerning the
late Miracle reported to have been done neer to
the Town of Saumur.*

S I R,

I Perceive you have heard of the vaunting of the *Roman Catholicks*, who boast that our Lord Jesus Christ appeared visibly upon one of their Altars the 2d of *June* last past; and also that the Bishop of *Angers* hath written a pastoral letter, wherein he relates that upon Saturday, within the Octave of the Sacrament, *Jesus Christ* did manifest himself in the Host in a Parish near the Town of *Saumur*; and this to induce the People to yeild a greater veneration to their Sacrament; and also to convince the *Hereticks*, (as he is pleased to call us) who deny the real Presence of *Christ's Body*, under the Species of Bread and Wine. And they brag so high of this Story, that they have sent Copies of the said Letter out of the Realm, translated in Forrein Languages. But give me leave, Sir, to tell you, that their Boasting is not good; for in that relation there is no sufficient ground to justify their Tenents, concerning the Sacrament. I confess that Miracles are a Seal to the true Religion, and a strong Testimony to the truth of those Doctrines which they countenance; for God, who is a God of Truth and not as Man, that he should lye, cannot alter the course of Nature, nor stretch out his Omnipotent Arm, to yeild Testimony to a Falshood; and he is so good and merciful, that it implies a contradiction that he should become the Deceiver of Mankind; but note, that it is only true and real Miracles that can evidence a divine Testimony, and not every thing that is apt to raise admiration in us because of our unacquaintedness with the causes of it, or manner of its production;

duction; much less a meer Juggle and Imposture, whereby the Eyes of men are deceived. The *Heathens* of old, boasted much of Miracles and Wonders. *Jannes*, and *Jambres* with their enchantments did in the like manner as *Moses*. *Apollonius*, *Thianus*, would suddenly vanish from the sight of men; the *Magometan* Fryers did strange Feats before *Busbequins*; *Simon Magus* dogged the Apostles, as it were at their heels, that he might overthrow the Faith. And we see that Christ hath foretold, *There should arise false Prophets that should shew great Signs and Wonders*, &c. St. Paul declares, that the coming of the Man of Sin should be after the Working of Satan with all Power; and the divine Apostle attributes the power of working Miracles to that second Beast that he beheld in Prophetick Raptures. Do the Romanists expect our Assent? they should then produce some of those great and true Miracles, which are the Finger of God, and cannot be wrought out but by an infinite Power; such as are the raising of a man from the dead. The giving of Sight to a man born Blind. And not some slight Event, such as may be wrought by the Devil, fit only to amuse the mind, and raise some admiration; such as is this Apparition whereof they boast at present. Nor do I herein wrong them by putting this in the rank of those wonders which the Devil is able to effect, to keep up his interest in the world, for you know that he could personate *Samuel*: and *Gabriel Biel*, a Doctor of their communion acknowledged, that the Apparitions of Flesh and Blood in the Sacrament, so much talked of, may be wrought by the Delusion of the Devil, to deceive those that are corrupt in their worship; God permitting them to be thus deluded, to punish their Infidelity. Also *Suarez*, a learned Jesuit, confesses that such Apparitions may be effected by the power of Satan, or by a strong Imagination; so that much Discretion, Wariness, and Wisdom, is needfull to avoid Seduction by them.

But while you hear me thus discoursing, mistake me not as if in the least I gave any credit to this pretended Apparition.

Tit. Li
sim. Va
lib. 1.
and lib.
1. Spar
Adrian
Exod. 7
Tim.
Philost
ejus vit
Epist. 4
beq.
Acts. 8.
Baron.
Spond.
n. 7.
Mat. 7.
14. 24
The
Revel.
14. and
Exod.

1. Sar
Biel in
Mis.
49, &

Suarez
Thom.
disp. 5

Truly the *Papists* are too too much to be suspected ; and they are guilty of too many Impostures to be beleived upon so slight grounds. I am not ignorant of the Devices of their *Monks*, who have sometimes gon beyond the *Devil* in Impudence ; if Famous Pope *Pius* the second may be beleived. I know their several Juglings which they would have the World to take for true Miracles : as for example, at *Muret* neer *Tholosa*, they made a hole in the back of the Image of a *Crucifix*, through which they put the Branch of a *Vine*, that the *Crucifix* might be seen to weep at that time that the *Vines* do bleed. At *Bern* in *Switzerland* about the beginning of the last Century, some Dominican *Fryers* were burnt for hiding themselves within the Statue of the *Virgin Mary*, and then making Moans, and giving such Answers as might procure credit to their Opinion of her Conception in Original Sin, which they maintained against the *Franciscans*. I remember also to have read in *Sleidan* and in *Wierus*, that in the year 1534, the *Franciscans* of *Orleans* hid a young Novice, who with Groans counterfeited the Soul of the Wife of the *Provost* of the City, (who it seems dyed without giving ought to their Convent) and declared, that for that cause she was tormented, intending by this trick to make the *Protestants* odious, and to get something of the *Provost* ; but the cheat was discovered, and the two Plotters of this Imposture, *Columannus* and *Stephanus* of *Arras*, Doctors of Divinity, were condemned by the Judges, whom the King and Cardinal-Legat appointed for Commissioners in that Cause to an amend honorable as they call it ; that is to a publick recantation of the cheat over against the Cathedral Church, and at the place where Malefactors are usually put to death. I have read also of an Image in the time of *HENRY* the 8th, of *England*, that was so artificially contrived, that a man might hide himself in it, and stir the hands of the Image to receive gifts which were presented, and make it look discontented on such as gave but little, but chearfully on such as gave liberally. Which was publickly shewed

shewed at St. *Pauls* by the Bishop of *Rockester*, and there broken in peices, the people laughing at that which they adored but an hour before. These proofs of the Impostures practised amongst the *Romanists*, are further made good by the testimony of *Nicolaus Lyranus* a *Romish Fryer*, who complaineth of the many and great abuses that are committed by the counterfeiting of Miracles by Priests for Worldly gain; *Gerson* Chancellor of the *Sorbon*, complained also of the same, comparing the World to an old doating Fellow whose head is full of dreams and illusions. *Melchor Canus*, Bishop of the *Canaries*, complaineth also with grief, that in the *Roman Legends* are to be found more Monsters, than Miracles, and that the Compiler thereof had an Iron Mouth and a leaden Heart: and the famous *Monsieur Godeau* now Bishop of *Vence*, acknowledgeth in the Preface of his *Ecclesiastical History*, published 16 years ago, that those Legends are not yet well purged of the Errours crept into them during the Barbarity of the latter Ages. Yea, even our Parliaments have been obliged to pass decrees to put a stop to the Boldness that was taken to counterfeit Miracles.

Judg now, Sir, whether there is not just ground to call in question all these Wonders so much cryed up in the *Roman Church*; and particularly this Apparition whereof they now boast. But to shew you how vain it seems, considet first, it is false which they alledg in the Title of the Letter you sent me from *England*, that there appeared at what time the Protestants held their Synod in the Town of *Saumur*. They thought doubtless by that circumstance to advance the credit of it; but observe their *Romana*, or rather *Punica fides* and how they may be trusted. They say the Miracle appeared the 2d, of *June*, and yet the *Sinod* did not meet until the 14, which is twelve dayes after. And moreover they write from *Saumur*, that this pretended Apparition was variously reported by the Curate of the place where it was seen; before the Bishop of *Angers* had published it for a Miracle, one *Monsieur Hubert*, late Councillor of

of the Court of *Saumur*, who stood hard by the Altar at that instant, saw nothing; and when he was wisht to approach neerer, answered it was needless, that he had Faith enough to believe. Others say they only saw the Host swell as big as a mans Finger; others that were present affirm, that what is fancied, was only from the Reflection of the Light. In fine, do but consider the Rigour they use against any that contradict this feigned Miracle; they imprisoned a *Protestant* at *Angers* for denying that it was truth; and almost plundered another at *Saumur*, because he laught at the Story. And you will find it plain, they are afraid that any exact Enquiry should be made of the Truth of it. Indeed the Bishop of *Angers* hath authorized it; but here note, that he is one of the four Bishops that at this present are fallen under the Pope's Displeasure, and are persecuted for being *Jansenists*; so that he hath been constrained to assist in this pious Fraud, for fear least he should be accounted a *Hugonot*. For amongst the *Papists*, that man shall hardly be esteemed a sound *Catholick*, that questions these popular Traditions, be they never so groundless, as the aforesaid Bishop of *Vence* confesseth in the Preface of his History. Doubtless men are apt to speak deceitfully for God, and to think that he stands in need of their Lyes, and are ready to make use of all kinds of Testimonies to confirm what they fancy, for a Truth; witness several Writings of the *Sibils* which were forged in the purest times of *Christianism*: no wonder then the Bishop hath been perswaded to approve this pretended Apparition, which did seem to him so fit to inflame the devotion of his People, and to convince those whom he calleth *Hereticks*. Certainly if Father *Senault* a famous *Oratorian* Priest, though he confesseth that the streams of ancient Writers, never reckoned *Raimond Nonnat* amongst those that were created *Cardinals* by *Gregory* the 9th; and though he knew full well that in that age *Cardinals* wore no Purple, scruples not in a Sermon made in his praise, to affirm he was a *Cardinal* in his *Purple-Robe*, because this Impression could work

a nota-

b 13. 7.

Senault Pane-
r. 3 vol. in
Preface.

a notable effect in the mind of his Auditors; who cannot chuse (saith he) but to be raviſht when they are told that he that was formerly a Slave amongst the *Turks*, was ſelected by the *Pope* to be promoted to the Dignity of a *Cardinal*; no marvel if the Biſhop of *Angers* hath authorized this pretended Apparition, of which, as you may perceive by his Letter, he expects alſo notable Effects.

But to draw to an end, conſider of what validity the evidence of this matter can be, being only grounded upon the depositions of certain Country Peaſants, who in matter of ſuperſtition, are not credible at all eſpecially in a device that is like to be profitable to their Village; as *Monſieur de Marolles*, a famous Abbot doth obſerve it in his Writings. Ignorant People, (ſaith he) in their ſuperſtition ſee not that which they ſtedfaſtly look upon. And he proveth that, by this following Story.

*Marolles in
memoires.*

There was a ſtrong report at *Paris*, that an Image of our *Lady*, (as he calls the *Virgin Mother*) being ſhot with a *Piſtol* by a *Heretick*, the Wound bled; and this was attested by a great number of Perſons who ſaid they were eye-witneſſes, and that above fifty thouſand People had ſeen it, as well as they; yet going himſelf to ſee the Image, he found that the report was utterly falſe. I could bring other Inſtances to ſhew how little credit ought to be given in ſuch matters to the *Vulgar*, who oftentimes is willing to be deceived, as was obſerved by the *Cardinal* 17.

Thuan. hiſt.

Carafa, who when he made his entry into *Paris*, beholding the People round about him in the ſtreets upon their Knees, ſigning them with the croſs, ſaid ſeveral times, *Quandoquidem populus iſte vult decepi decepiatur*: Seeing they are willing to be abuſed, let them be abuſed. But I will only put you in mind what may

be you have read as well as I in the *Hiſtory* of our *Church*, about a Pigeon at *Bourges*, which being wounded by a ſhot, and flying notwithstanding, lighted upon an Image; where he let ſome of his Blood drop; which was no ſooner perceived, but *Prieſts* and People with the Croſſes and Banners, flockt in proceſſion to the

*Eccleſiaſt.
ſtory of
Churches
France rom.*

Image.

These things considered, you will grant me, that the *Papists*, even those that imagine they have seen an Apparition, far from venturing upon such foul Idolatry as is the adoring the Sacrament of *Bread and Wine*, should mistrust themselves, and take counsel of *Pope Gregory the 11th*, who lying on his Death-bed with the *Host* in his hands, remembering how he had been cheated by the Impostures of *Catharina Senensis*, seriously exhorted all that were present, *to beware of those Men or Women, that talk of Apparitions*, as we read in *Gerson*. And imitate that ancient Godly Man mentioned in the 9th Tome of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, who would never give Ear to a shape of *Jesus Christ* which seemingly appeared to him, nor shew any respect to it. *I shall enjoy him by Vision* (said he) *when I am in Heaven; it is enough for me, whilest I am upon earth, to see him by Faith*. For indeed, in this life we are *to walk by Faith, and not by Sight*, and blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have beleived. The Lord imprint the Love of his Truth in the Hearts of Men, that they be no more so easily perswaded to believe Lyes; and grant that his Church assaulted so many wayes, may triumph over these that would rob her of what she hath, and take away her Crown.

I am

Your Friend and Servant

August 23. 1668.

PHILAEETHES.



British

Tracts

1668

L 56

JUN 25 '40